



# CHANDAMAMA

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Founder: CHAKRAPANI

## THE MONTH OF MOMENTOUS EVENTS

The month we know as August today was known in ancient days *Sextilis* to Romans. It was their emperor, Augustus Caesar, who named it as August, just as his predecessor, Julius Caesar, had changed the name of the month *Quintilis* to July.

Augustus Caesar chose to name the month as August after his own name because many happy events of his life took place in that particular month. But if we look into history, we will see that August has been a month of momentous events through the ages. Beginning with the destruction of Sodom and Gamorrah, two cities on the Dead Sea, in the 19th century B.C., and the destruction of Pompeii two thousand years later to the major events of the two World Wars including the final victory of the Allies in the World War II, on 14/15 August, 1945, a long calendar of events can be drawn to show how August has been the time of great changes in the world.

And, to this calendar of events, a prominent addition has been the Independence of India that came on the 15th of August, 1947. Significantly, on the 75th birthday of Sri Aurobindo, "the prophet of Indian nationalism".

Many a sacrifice was there behind India winning her freedom.

We celebrate the 29th anniversary of the event through an illustrated feature on the valiant Queen of Kittur, who had once humiliated the British conquerors of India. This also is an occasion for us to pay tributes to the memory of the legendary King Bharata, from whom our country derived her name.



## IN THIS ISSUE

- \* TWO GREAT LEGENDS—of King Bharata and Princess Sukanya
- \* A TALE OF IMMORTAL FRIENDSHIP—in our regular feature on Proverbs and Phrases
- \* THE SAGA OF THE QUEEN OF KITTUR—Through Pictures
- \* A STORY TO TELL YOU THE SECRET OF A MAGIC

PLUS 6 COMPLETE STORIES  
AND OTHER REGULAR FEATURES

## PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



Sundaram



Mr. B. Takalkar

These two photographs are somewhat related. Can you think of suitable captions? They could be single words, or several words, but the two captions must be related to each other.

20 will be awarded as prize for the best caption. Remember, your entry must reach us by 31st AUGUST

Winning captions will be announced in OCTOBER Issue.

Put your entry on a POST CARD, specify the month, give your full name, address, age and post to: PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST, CHANDAMAMA MAGAZINE, MADRAS - 600 026

### Result of Photo Caption Contest held in June Issue

The prize is awarded to: Mr. Nalam Doraiswamy

4, Main Road, Royapuram, Madras - 600 013.

Winning Entry - 'Majestic Trudge' - 'I dare not ouodge'



## NEWS FOR YOU...

### **The Mysterious Messenger**

A remarkable recent discovery gives us the news of a small planet continuously shuttling between our earth and the Mars. In its earthward journey it comes rather quite close to us, casting glances at us from a distance of 20,00,000 miles only, which is not much of a distance astronomically, to be sure. (We must remember that the earth's mean distance from the sun is 92.9 million miles!) Nine months elapse between the planet's one 'visit' to the earth and the next.

We are yet to learn about the message it carries from the earth to the Mars and the vice versa.

### **Time to Return Home!**

Solomon islands in the southwest Pacific were the arena of some of the bitterest fights during the World War II. Japanese who had occupied the islands in 1942 were finally defeated. But some of their soldiers who escaped into the deep forests are still unaware of the fact that the war was over! An expedition is being organised to 'rescue' them. Planes and helicopters will fly over the forests dropping leaflets and playing old familiar music to lure the hiding soldiers out to light and then to return home.

## ...AND SOME VIEWS TOO

### **A Guide to 20th Century Thoughts on Evolution**

Up to 30,000 years ago man could boast a proud evolutionary record, but since then no physical improvement has occurred in the human species.

—*Ernest A. Hooton*

Three ideas stand out above all others in the influence they have exerted and are destined to exert upon the development of the human race: The idea of the Golden Rule, the idea of natural law, and the idea of age-long growth, or evolution.

—*Robert A. Millikan*

There are no short cuts in evolution.

—*Louis D. Brandeis*

Far from being swallowed up by Evolution, Man is now engaged in transforming our earlier idea of Evolution in terms of himself, and thereafter plotting its new outline.

—*Teilhard de Chardin*

Evolution is  
than living



# A Gift From A Thief

Long ago, there was a pundit in Kashmir who hailed from a highly aristocratic family. Once they were very wealthy. But they had fallen into bad days and the pundit had hardly any property left with him.

But he did not reveal his condition to anyone. With a great effort, he managed to maintain the show of affluence.

The pundit had a beautiful daughter. Many young men were eager to marry her. But the pundit was reluctant to arrange for the marriage because he was not in a position to buy ornaments for her. However, there was a particular young man who, he thought, would make an excellent bridegroom for his daughter. He had asked the young man to wait for a year. The young man had happily consented to it. But as time passed, the pundit became more and more anxious. For, he did not know where to get the money for the

pundit's daughter was well-known for her beauty and sweet nature, Sundar desired to marry her. He came to the pundit and opened his heart before him.

But the pundit knew Sundar to be a dishonest and cruel man. He had heard a number of stories about Sundar's bad treatment of his wife who had lately died. So, the pundit told Sundar, "I'm sorry, I have already promised my daughter's hand to another young man."

"But if she marries me, you won't be required to give her any ornament. All the jewellery of my first wife will be hers," said Sundar.

"Thank you. But I have already bought ornaments for my daughter," replied the pundit.

Sundar returned, fuming. He knew a notorious thief. He found out the thief and confided to him, "The pundit has just purchased a number of costly ornaments for his daughter. It is easy to steal from his house. Why don't you try?"

"I will," promised the thief.



and he entered the pundit's house and hid in his bed-room the same night.

The pundit was lying on his bed. After some time his wife entered the room and said, "People are asking about our daughter's marriage. Why don't you fix up a date?"

The pundit answered in a broken voice, "I want to, but how can I fix up a date unless I have been able to buy ornaments for her? I have kept the fact hidden even from you that I am now a poor man. I don't have any property which I could sell and obtain ornaments with the price!"

The pundit's wife wept when she heard this. Going to console her, the pundit too could not check his tears.

The thief, who heard the conversation, sneaked out of

the house. He was trembling with rage because he thought that Sundar had played a practical joke on him. He advanced towards Sundar's house.

Before it was dawn, the pundit's wife woke up at a thudding sound. A bundle had been thrown onto her bed through the window. She opened it and found that it was full of costly ornaments. There was a slip of paper which read, "Please use this gift from a friend. Do not tell anything to anybody. Perform your daughter's marriage as soon as possible."

The pundit's daughter was duly married. It was only years later, when Sundar found out a bride for himself and opened his trunk for his first wife's ornaments that he learnt that they had gone! But he could never know what happened to them!





## **BHARATA-Who gave the country her name**

Even hunters were afraid of entering certain parts of the forest. But there was a lad who dared into them, jumping from rock to rock, swinging from branch to branch and trudging through bushes and shrubs.

Daring, no doubt, he was. But he was much more. There was something charming about him, so much so that even the tigers and lions would do him no harm. Indeed, he could enjoy a ride on their back and was often seen playing with their cubs. He was quite at home in a lion's den as he was in his hut.

But his mother was anxious whenever the boy was out of her sight. To her, the boy was a prince, the future king. It was not only her motherly concern, but also her solemn duty to see that he grew up and learnt his lessons well and lived safe.

The boy, indeed, was the son of Dushmanta, a famous king. Once on an expedition into the forest, the king had come for rest at the Ashram of Rishi Kanwa. The rishi was away.

But the king was duly received by his foster-daughter, Shakuntala.

Shakuntala was the daughter of the rishi Viswamitra and the nymph Menaka. Heaven was Menaka's home. She could not have carried a daughter who was mortal like her human father, to the heaven. Kanwa found the child abandoned on the river Malini and brought her to his Ashram where she grew up to be a maiden of exquisite beauty.

The king, charmed by Shakuntala, expressed his desire to marry her. Shakuntala could not resist the king's entreatments. They were married, after the king promised that his son that would be born of Shakuntala would ascend the throne after him.

The king lived in the Ashram for some days and then left for his palace. Shakuntala, in due course, gave birth to a son who was named Bharata.

Kalidasa, the great poet of ancient India, has given a dramatic account of Shakuntala's re-union with her





husband:

One day, after Dushmanta had left for his palace, Shankuntala sat engrossed in sweet thoughts about her husband. Durvasa, another celebrated rishi, came to meet Kanwa. But Kanwa was not there and Shakuntala took no notice of him. Furious at this discourtesy, the visiting rishi uttered a curse saying that he on whom Shakuntala was concentrated would not even recognise her!

Shakuntala was too unmind-

ful to hear even the curse. But two of her dear friends, Anasuya and Priyamvada, reached the spot just in time to hear it. They implored the rishi for mercy. The rishi calmed down and said that although the curse could not be revoked, it would lose its effectiveness after a certain period.

And it so happened that when Shakuntala was sent by Kanwa to her husband's house, Dushmanta failed to recognise her. Shakuntala tried to remind him of their marriage by showing



him a ring he had given her. But, to her utter dismay, she found the ring missing. Disappointed, she went back.

However, the ring which Shakuntala had unknowingly dropped in a river was recovered by a fisherman. He brought it to the king who, at its sight, instantly remembered all about his love for and marriage with Shakuntala.

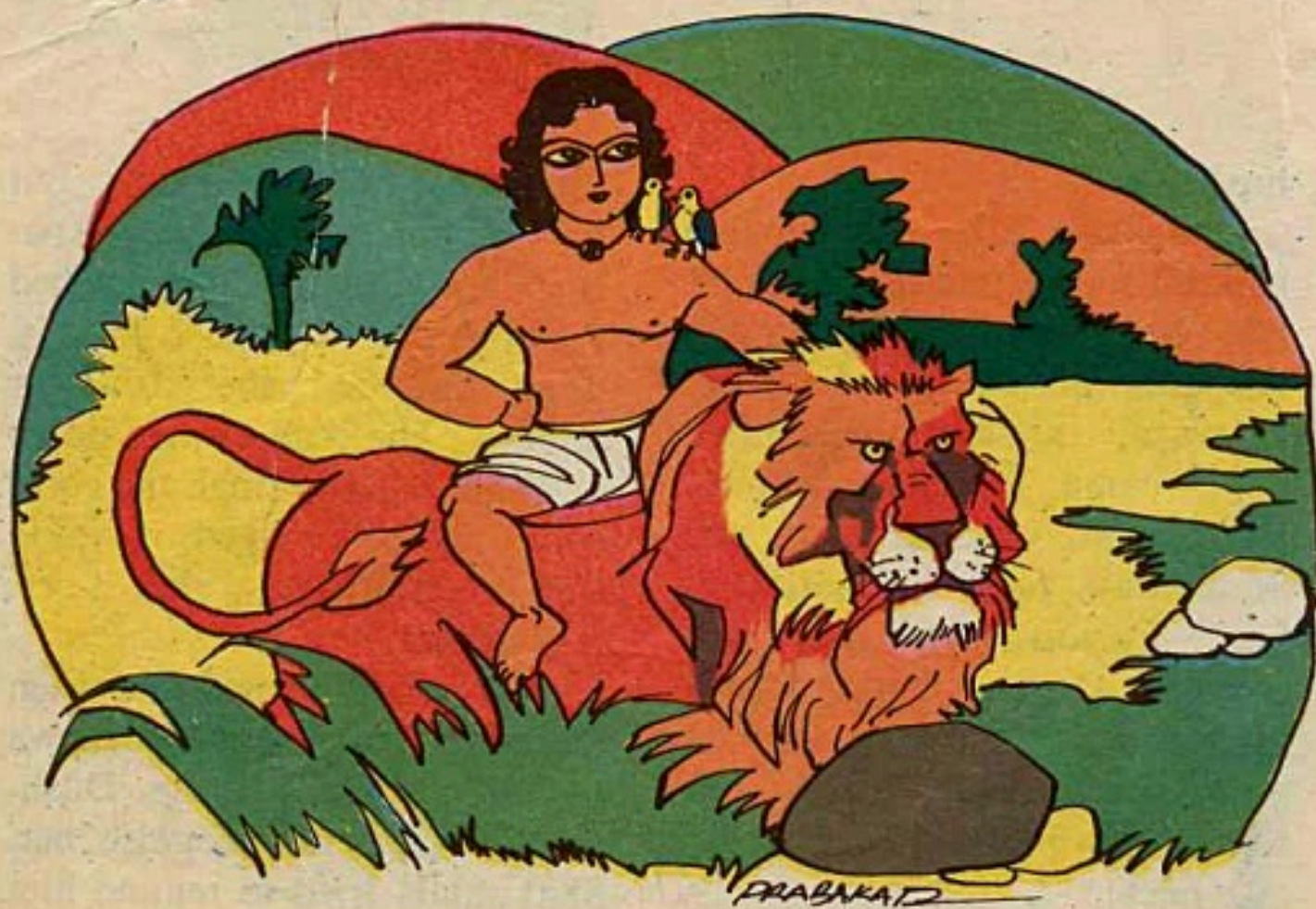
The repentant king apologised to Shakuntala and brought her and Bharata home.

Bharata succeeded Dushmanta to the throne. He soon

proved himself brave and mighty. He brought all the kingdoms of the then India under his rule and performed a number of *Yajnas* on the banks of the rivers Yamuna, Saraswati and Ganga, signifying his victories.

Because Bharata achieved the unification of the country, the country came to be known after him as Bharatavarsha.

This king of legendary fame was the ancestor of the Kauravas and the Pandavas of whom we read in the *Mahabharata*.







LEGENDS OF INDIA

## SUKANYA'S CHOICE

Beautiful was Sukanya, the daughter of King Saryati.

One day the king, the queen and their darling daughter, Sukanya, went for an outing into the forest, accompanied by a number of servants and soldiers. They camped on the bank of a vast lake abounding in lotuses.

The weather was pleasant and the colourful forest was a feast to the eyes. The princess, inspired by a spirit of adventure, deliberately left her maids behind her and padded on alone. But soon she came near an ant-hill and stopped. Nobody was around. She realised that it was time for her to return to her parents.

As she was about to leave the spot, she was attracted towards what seemed like a pair of glittering sparks in a hole on the ant-hill. She took them as fireflies. In a bid to bring them out, she thrust a forked thorn into the hole.

Suddenly she heard some angry growl. It sounded like human voice. But looking around she saw no one. It was getting dusky. Afraid to be alone any longer, she hurried to her parents.

But what would she see there? The king, the queen, and all their companions had suddenly fallen sick. The king was a far-sighted man. He thought for a while and said, addressing his



people, "Somewhere in this part of the forest dwells a great rishi, Chyavana. Has anyone of you, knowingly or unknowingly, done something to incur his wrath?"

Nobody could remember doing anything to displease the rishi. But, shy and sad, the princess stood before her father and reported what she had done playfully. "I do not know if the human voice I heard was that of the rishi," she concluded.

Led by the princess, the king visited the spot where the ant-hill stood. At his order his servants demolished the ant-hill carefully. The king had guess-

ed right. Out of the ant-hill emerged the rishi, Chyavana. What the princess had mistaken as fireflies were the rishi's eyes. The ant-hill had covered his body as the rishi sat immobile for a long time.

Sukanya's playful action had blinded the rishi. The king lay prostrate at his feet and apologised for the foolish deed of the princess.

"O king, I am not angry with the princess or you. That is why I have uttered no curse. The sickness you are experiencing is the bare consequence of your daughter causing great discomfort to me. Blinded in this old age, how am I to live alone







in this forest? How am I to continue my askesis?" asked the rishi.

The king invited the rishi to come over to the palace where he would be kept in great comfort. Alternatively, he proposed to arrange for a number of servants to attend upon him in the forest itself.

But none of such proposals was acceptable to the rishi. "One cannot do askesis surrounded by servants. However, I can take a wife who would look after me. Offer your daughter to me, O King, and you will be relieved of your sickness."

The king returned to his palace, without either accepting or rejecting the rishi's proposal. The sickness had in the meanwhile spread to all his subjects. He must offer the princess in marriage to the rishi if he wished to get rid of the affliction. But how to sacrifice a young daughter of Sukanya's charm and virtues, fit to consort an emperor, to a poor old man of the forest who was also blind?

Sukanya knew the conflict with which his father was beset. She appeared before the king and insisted that she be given in marriage to the rishi. "Father! It is a great luck to be able to serve a holy man like Chyavana. I have never sought after comforts and sensuous pleasures. I will be as happy in the forest as I have been in the palace. Please arrange for my marriage with the rishi and get rid of the affliction."

At last the king was obliged to do as his daughter proposed. She was duly married to the rishi and all the people of the kingdom were relieved of their sickness.

Sukanya refused to keep any maid with her. She wore no ornament or lovely clothes to which she was accustomed all



her life. Following the way of a typical hermitess, she put on dress made of barks and fibres of the tree.

She went on serving her blind old husband most faithfully. She will rise at dawn before the rishi awoke and arrange for the rishi's ablution. As the rishi would sit in meditation, she would wander about looking for fruits and roots. At night she would massage the old man's legs until he fell asleep.

Days passed and Sukanya had no regrets.

One morning she was returning to her hut after bathing in the lake. She was stopped by a pair of youths who looked alike.

"O charming damsel, who are you and why are you roaming in this forest, alone?" They asked with astonishment.

Sukanya told them briefly the cause of her living in the forest. The pair introduced themselves as the twin sons of the sun god, brothers Aswini Kumar. Enamoured of her charm, they said, "O beautiful one, you deserve a much higher station in life. Be pleased to marry one of us."

Sukanya was annoyed. She even threatened to put them



under a curse. The two gods knew that a curse uttered by a *sati*—whose only *dharma* in life was her absolute devotion to her husband—never went in vain. Still they were unable to get over their fascination for her. So they put forth a proposal which they hoped would leave some chance open for one of them to win her hand.

They said, "We are the physicians of the gods. We know secrets by which we can transform your husband into a charming young man, cured of his blindness. Then we three would stand before you and you have to choose one of us as



your husband.”

The possibility of her husband getting back his eye-sight gave a certain weight to the proposal. Yet Sukanya did not take a decision by herself. She hurried to her husband and reported the whole matter to him. The rishi advised her to accept the proposal.

Then, directed by the brothers Aswini Kumar, the rishi entered the lake for a dip. Along with him the two gods too entered the lake and had a dip. When the three rose from the waters, they looked exactly alike!

The three bright youths stood before Sukanya, with equal eagerness twinkling in their

eyes. Sukanya, for a moment, did not know what to do. It would be worse than death for her if she chose for her husband one of the two gods instead of the rishi, her true consort. She closed her eyes and invoked the Grace of the Divine Mother.

Her inner vision opened up. She knew who among the three was Chyavana. She stepped forward and held his hand indicating her choice.

The two gods now realised the purity of Sukanya's character. They departed, with the blessings of the rishi.

Chyavana and Sukanya lived long, an ideal couple given to spiritual pursuits.





## SAID WITH FINGERS!

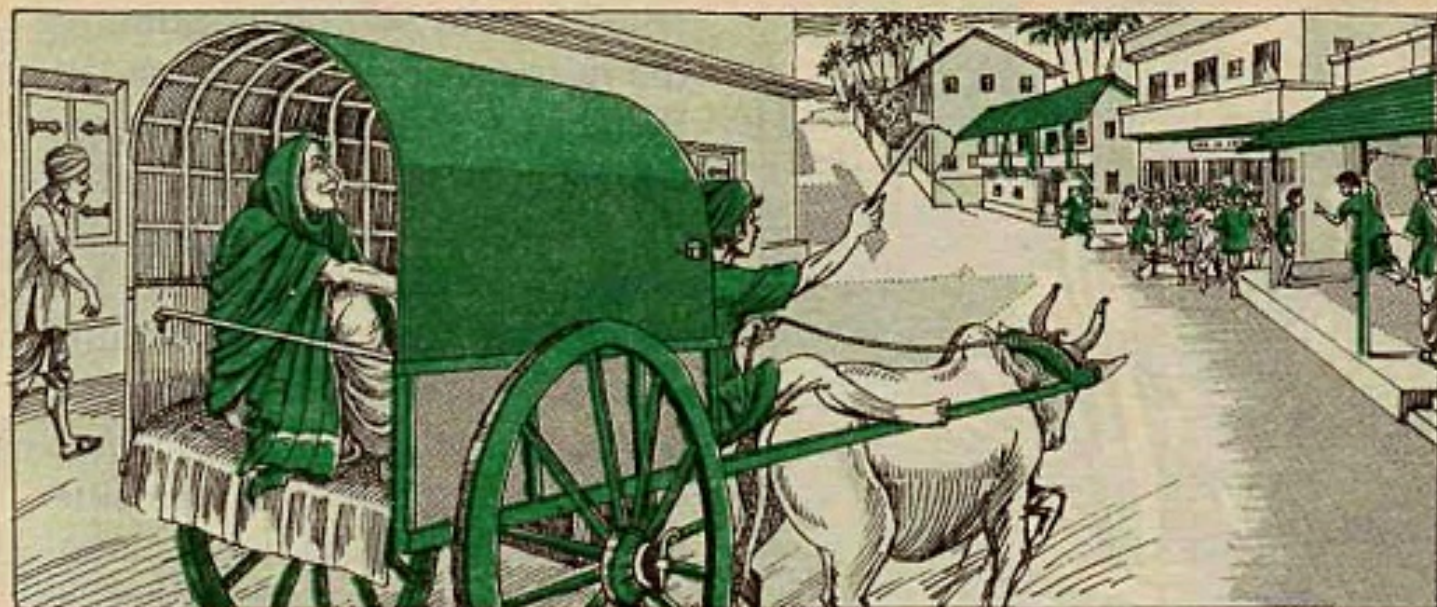
Naveen was a new entrant to the world of commerce. One day he went from village to village and purchased a good quantity of potatoes from farmers. He put them in his cart and proceeded to the market. He had spent two hundred and fifty rupees in buying the potatoes. He planned to sell them for three hundred rupees. It was not easy to find a merchant who would buy so much potatoes. At last a fellow from the town approached Naveen and raised three fingers before him. Naveen asked him, "You mean, you are ready to pay three hundred rupees?" The fellow again showed his three fingers. In good faith Naveen transferred the potatoes from his cart to the buyer's. But the fellow paid him only two hundred and fifty rupees!

Naveen took the man to the judge. The man said, "It is true that I showed three fingers. But one of my fingers is half the normal size. So I meant two hundred and fifty rupees!"

"Fine. But you showed them twice. Hence you must pay five hundred rupees," said the judge.







## A BOOK OF BURGLARY

There was a time when the very name Veersen aroused terror. He was a dacoit non-pareil. He plundered and burgled hundreds of houses. But he was never caught.

When Veersen grew old he realised that it was no more safe with his waning strength to lead the life of an adventurer. He had accumulated wealth enough to pass the rest of his life in comfort.

He bought a house in the city of Dharanagar and settled down there. He employed a young man named Gangadhar to do his household work. He soon took a liking for Gangadhar who seemed to be faithful and hardworking.

Once Veersen fell sick. In the city lived a famous physician named Somadev. Veersen called on him. The physician examined him and gave him some medicines. Veersen was cured in a short time.

Unfortunately however, Somadev passed away soon thereafter. His death saddened all the people of Dharanagar. Veersen also worried, thinking, "What would become of me if I fall sick again?"

But before a year had elapsed the people were happy to see that one of the disciples of Somadev, Sumanta, proved as talented as his late master.

After some time Veersen fell sick again. Gangadhar hired a





cart and led him to Sumanta's house. On their way they saw a crowd thrashing a young fellow. "Will you inquire what is the matter?" Veersen asked Gangadhar. From the passers-by Gangadhar gathered that the young man had been caught in the act of stealing. So he was being punished.

Veersen felt sad on account of the young man's plight. "I wish he had learnt the art of stealing better!" he told himself and sighed.

Veersen was cordially received by Sumanta. Before leaving the physician's house, Veersen told him, "I must congratulate

you for your so ably continuing the mission of the late Somadev. People say that you are as good a physician as your master."

"It is all due to my noble master's kindness. He has left me a few volumes of manuscripts. They contain, in simple language, all my master knew of diseases and their treatments. He has also written down elaborately the invaluable experiences of his life as a physician. I read them with great devotion and follow his instructions faithfully. That is all I do," said Sumanta.

An exciting idea flashed in Veersen's mind as he heard Sumanta. On his way back home, he decided to write down the art of stealing. "Just as Sumanta has been benefited by his master's labour, so also young thieves can greatly benefit by my work," he thought.

Veersen devoted hours everyday to write down the history and experiences of his life: how he was initiated to burglary; how he turned a dacoit; how he worked in a gang and how he worked alone; how to determine who is a wealthy man; the various ways of plundering a house; what to do when suddenly in trouble, etc.

After he completed writing



the book, he revised it and made the necessary corrections. But before he had pondered on how to bring the work to the notice of ambitious thieves, he found one morning the work missing!

And soon he realised that along with the work Gangadhar too was missing!

He was terribly upset. He had no strength to write out the book again. Besides Gangadhar's treachery gave him a severe shock. He had never expected it.

His suffering was great as he could not say a word about it to anybody.

Within a month the city was agog with the story of a daring thief. From the reports of the thefts, Veersen became sure that it was Gangadhar who was applying the knowledge of the stolen book to practice!

Veersen could not pass his time in peace. Gangadhar knew where he kept his wealth. Thought Veersen, "One of these nights the fellow is certain to feel tempted to steal my wealth. I must be ready to deal with him."

The king, in the meanwhile, announced that if anybody can help capture the thief, he would be rewarded with a lakh of



rupees.

Veersen did not sleep at nights. A month later, it happened as he had expected. Gangadhar tried his hand at stealing his master's wealth. Old and weak though Veersen had become, he had not forgotten his tricks. He succeeded in capturing Gangadhar by the help of a rope trap.

But he did not know what to do with the young thief. If he would hand him over to the king's officers for sake of the reward, Gangadhar would disclose everything about him. After brooding over the problem for a while he set Ganga-





dhar free.

Gangadhar went away, but he returned soon and throwing down the book he had stolen, told Veersen, "Damn with your work. Had it been really good, you could not have captured me. I had not forgotten to take whatever precautions you have prescribed in the book. But they proved worthless!"

Veersen picked up the book and threw it into his oven and said, "You are right. Because

of this book I lost the peace of my mind and had to pass sleepless nights anticipating your arrival. I was a fool to think that my work would be as beneficial as the late Somadev's work. Let us forget whatever has happened. Come, remain with me. I will give you money. Begin your life newly as an honest trader."

Gangadhar agreed to the proposal.

### THE GRAMMARIAN'S LAST WORDS

There was a grammarian whose observations were sharp,  
But once he fell down the stairs with a bump.

His dying declaration,  
Was this epoch-making contribution:

"Down" is superfluous with falling, for, one cannot fall up!

—MANOJ DAS





## THE QUEEN OF KITTUR

Three decades before the famous Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, the British merchant-invaders of India, the East India Company, got a terrific shake in the hands of a simple but brave lady of Karnataka, Rani Channamma, the first Indian woman to take up arms

against the mighty British.

Channamma was the younger of the two ranis of Malla Surja, the raja of Kittur, a small but opulent kingdom of Karnataka. Although she and the elder rani, Rudramma, had a son each, she made the dying raja adopt yet another son.



Rudramma had no interest in the affairs of the state. After Malla Surja's death, Rani Channamma arranged for the coronation of Rudramma's son. She appointed her own son as the young raja's bodyguard. But to everybody's great sorrow, both the princes died soon. Rani Channamma installed the adopted son on the throne.





Parts of India was then occupied by the East India Company. Eager to grab a new area, the company's Political Agent, Thackeray, reached Kittur with an army. He had the audacity to summon the rani to his camp. The rani spurned the summon, for Kittur had no obligation to obeying the company's order.

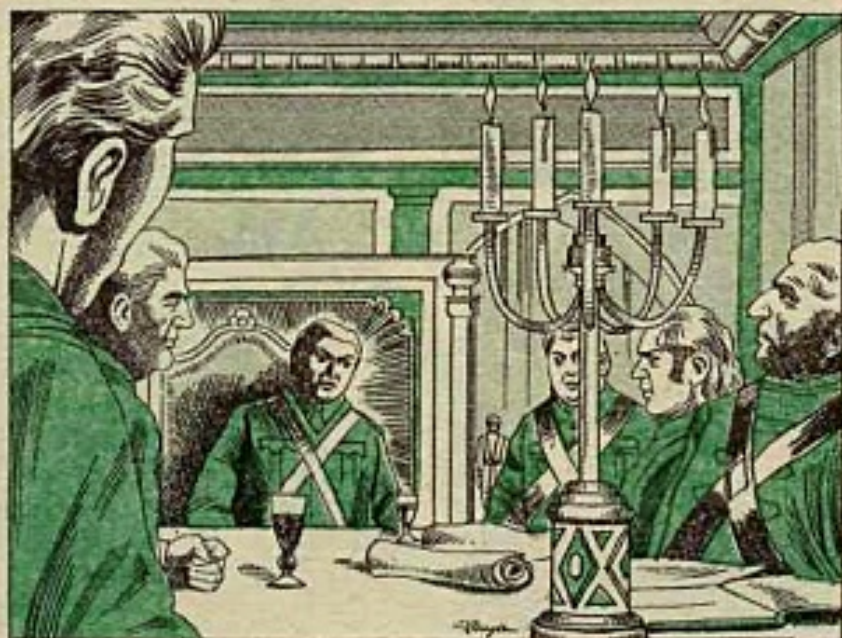
The furious Thackeray announced that Kittur was taken over by the company as the princes had died. He then ordered his soldiers to rush at the fort. He had not dreamt of having to face any resistance. But a volley of gun-shots checked their advance. Thackeray's two lieutenants, Black and Dipton, fell to the shots.



Thackeray was bewildered. He gathered up his nervous army and himself led the invasion. Rani Channamma was directing the operation from her terrace. At her order, an expert gunner took aim at Thackeray and shot. Thackeray was killed instantly. The invaders fled.



It was a complete defeat for the British. Many of their soldiers were captured by the Kittur army. These prisoners were treated with due courtesy and were lodged comfortably in the fort.

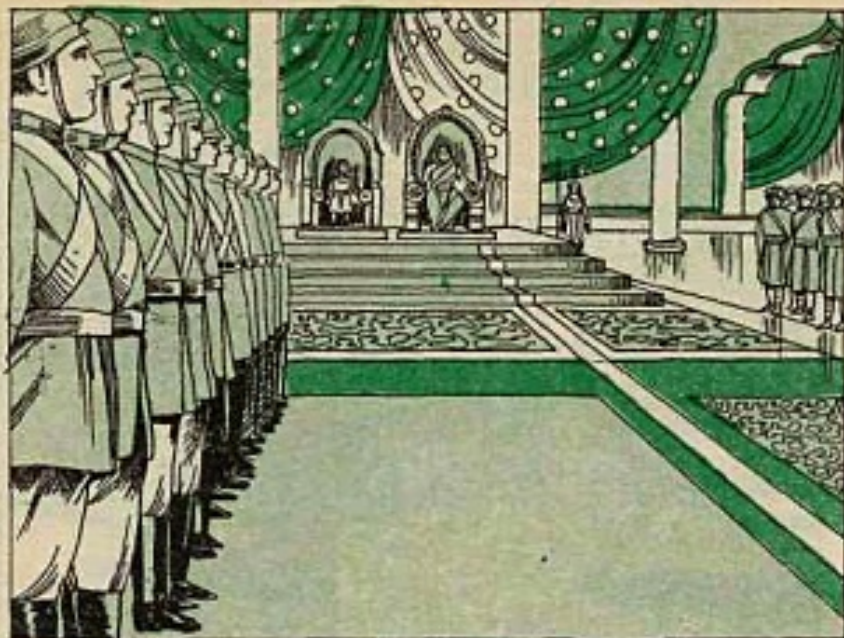


In an urgent meeting the East India Company's directors decided to attack Kittur again. Their humiliating defeat in the hands of a lady had given a great blow to their prestige. They were determined to avenge their humiliation, by hook or by crook.

The company collected soldiers from its various centres and led a huge army to Kittur. But they did not attack the fort forthwith. They sent a pledge to the rani that they will go back if the rani freed the British prisoners.

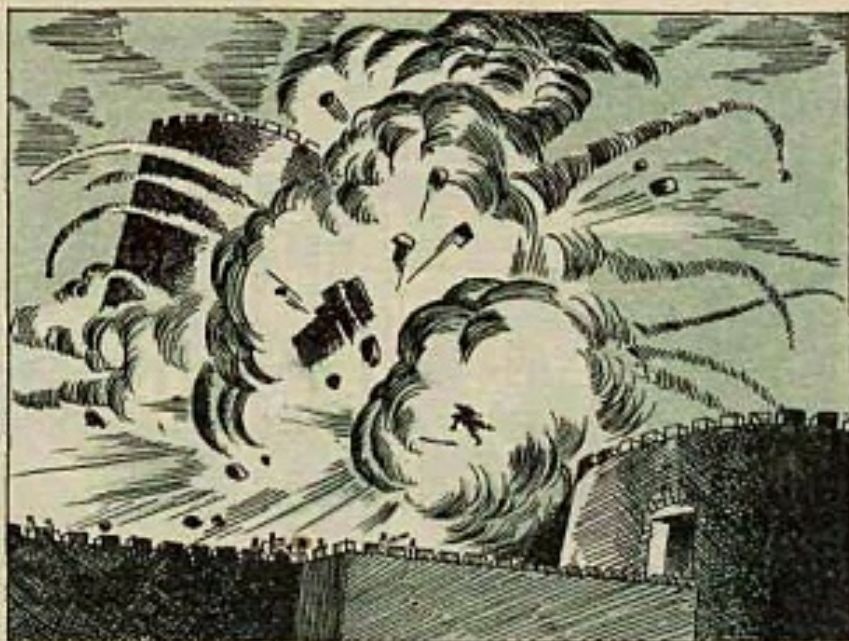






The rani believed in the word of honour sent by the company and freed the British soldiers who were prisoners in the fort. The prisoners bowed to the rani and departed, with the promise that they will ever remain the friends of Kittur!

But as soon as the prisoners reached the company's camp, the company mounted an instant attack on the Kittur fort. The prisoners had come to know where the fort's ammunition store was. The company's army first set the store ablaze. With the ammunitions destroyed, the fort could not be defended.



Thus, treachery brought the East India Company victory over Kittur. The rani was taken prisoner. She was promised liberty if she would openly admit the company's right over Kittur. But she refused to do so and died a martyr's glorious death in Bailhongal fort where she was interned, in 1829.





*Tales from the Panchatantra*

## The Mighty Elephant And Three Tiny Creatures

In a certain forest, on a banian tree, lived a little sparrow. With continuous effort spread over several days, she had built a cosy nest on a leafy branch of the tree and had laid a few eggs in it.

In the same forest lived a young elephant infamous for his careless conduct. He would uproot plants for no reason whatever. He would scare the smaller creatures and would enjoy a hearty laugh at their distress. Elephants were gentle and dignified. As such, they never approved of the behaviour of this young elephant. They often asked him to mend his ways. But he paid no heed to his seniors' advice.

There was a drizzle one noon.

The elephant, while wandering lazily, came under the banian tree. With his trunk he playfully gave a shake to some of the branches.

Afraid that the elephant might dabble with the branch which sheltered her nest, the sparrow hovered before him and appealed to him, "Please spare the branch which is just over your head. I have built my nest on it and the nest contains eggs. You will be delighted to see my young ones when they would emerge from the eggs."

"I can be delighted even now," said the elephant and immediately broke that particular branch and threw it on the ground."





The sparrow's eggs were shattered to fragments.

While the sparrow cried, the elephant moved away, giving out a gleeful trumpet.

The sparrow cursed the elephant and went on asking other birds how to take revenge on him. All the birds sympathised with her, but they said, "How can we do anything to the mighty elephant? We have just to bear with the injustice. That is all."

But the sparrow could not forget her agony. She went to meet an old friend of hers, a woodpecker.

The woodpecker heard the

sparrow with sympathy and said, "No doubt, it is difficult to do anything to a strong and huge creature like the elephant. But let us not accept defeat easily. I have a wise friend, a bee, in the nearby tree. Let us seek her opinion."

They went to the bee and told her everything. Said the bee, "I have a wise friend, a frog. Let us go to him. I'm sure, he will show us some way to bring about the wicked elephant's fall."

They went to the frog and sat in a conference. The frog thought a lot and presented a plan of action before his friends. All were happy with the plan.

Next day they set out to execute the plan. After some search they found out the elephant lolling near a deep precipice. The bee flew close to his left eye. Annoyed, the elephant closed the eye. Instantly the woodpecker set his sharp beak on it.

The elephant tried to see his way with the remaining eye. But the bee scared him again. As soon as he closed the right eye, the woodpecker made a strong peck at it and destroyed it too.

Totally blinded, the elephant





ran to and fro, with great agony. Just then the frog, seated on the brink of the precipice, croaked. The elephant thought that there was a pond nearby. He rushed towards the precipice, with the hope that a dip in cool water would give him relief.

But in the next moment he

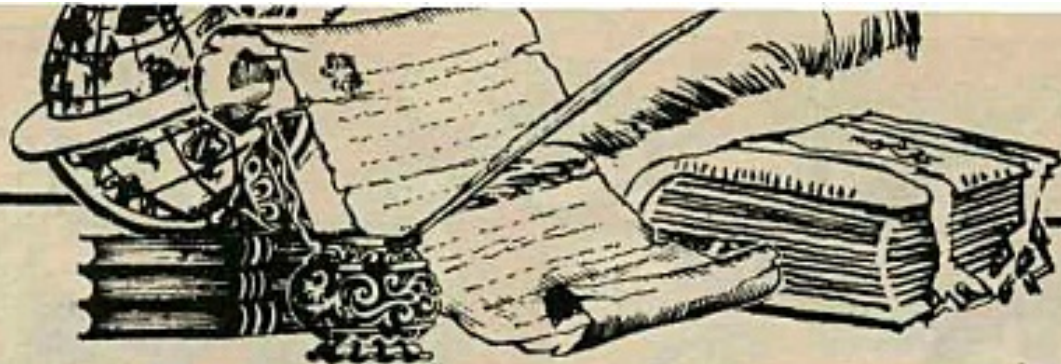
had a headlong fall into the deep precipice resulting in his death.

"We are no doubt small creatures," said the frog, "but even small creatures can destroy a mighty tyrant when they have just reasons to do it and when they work with prudence."

## SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCES







# DAMON AND PYTHIAS

You have read about the tyrant Dionysius in the June, 1976 number of your magazine. The following significant incident took place during his reign.

In his kingdom lived two friends, Damon and Pythias. Both were philosophers.

Once it so happened that Dionysius became displeased with Pythias. Extreme punishment awaited those who incurred the tyrant's wrath. Pythias was condemned to death.

Pythias appealed to the tyrant to suspend the sentence for a few days so that he could go home and bid goodbye to his family and friends. The tyrant agreed to allow him leave if someone stood guarantee for him.

Damon stepped forward to take his friend's place in the prison. Pythias was allowed to

proceed home while Damon was put behind the bars.

Pythias had promised to return from his far away village before the day of execution fixed by the tyrant. But he was not to be seen. The day of execution dawned and everybody thought that Pythias had betrayed the faith of his friend. Damon was ridiculed as well as pitied for his plight. He was then led to the execution ground as the hour for Pythias's execution approached. The tyrant Dionysius was present on the spot. At his instruction Damon was placed on the scaffold.

All that remained now was for Damon to be killed. But in the nick of time someone was seen rushing towards the ground all the while crying out not to carry out the execution. As he



# HIAS



drew near, the crowd recognised him as Pythias.

Thus, Pythias, who had been delayed on the way, at last managed to arrive in time to save his friend. But his friend, Damon, who had been happy at the prospect of giving his life and thereby saving Pythias, was disappointed. The two friends embraced each other and wept, Pythias with joy for saving Damon and Damon with sorrow for not being able to save Pythias.

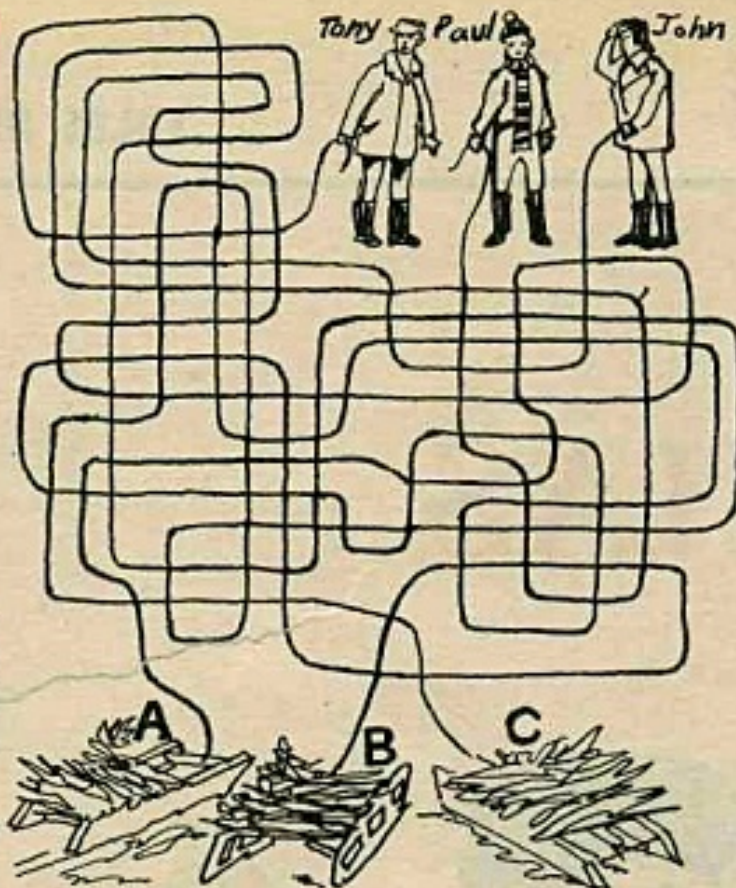
The tyrant was deeply moved to see this. He had hardly any friend. He freed Pythias and Damon and begged of them to accept him as one of their friends.

Thus, "Damon and Pythias" came to mean two inseparable friends, each ready to sacrifice anything for the other.

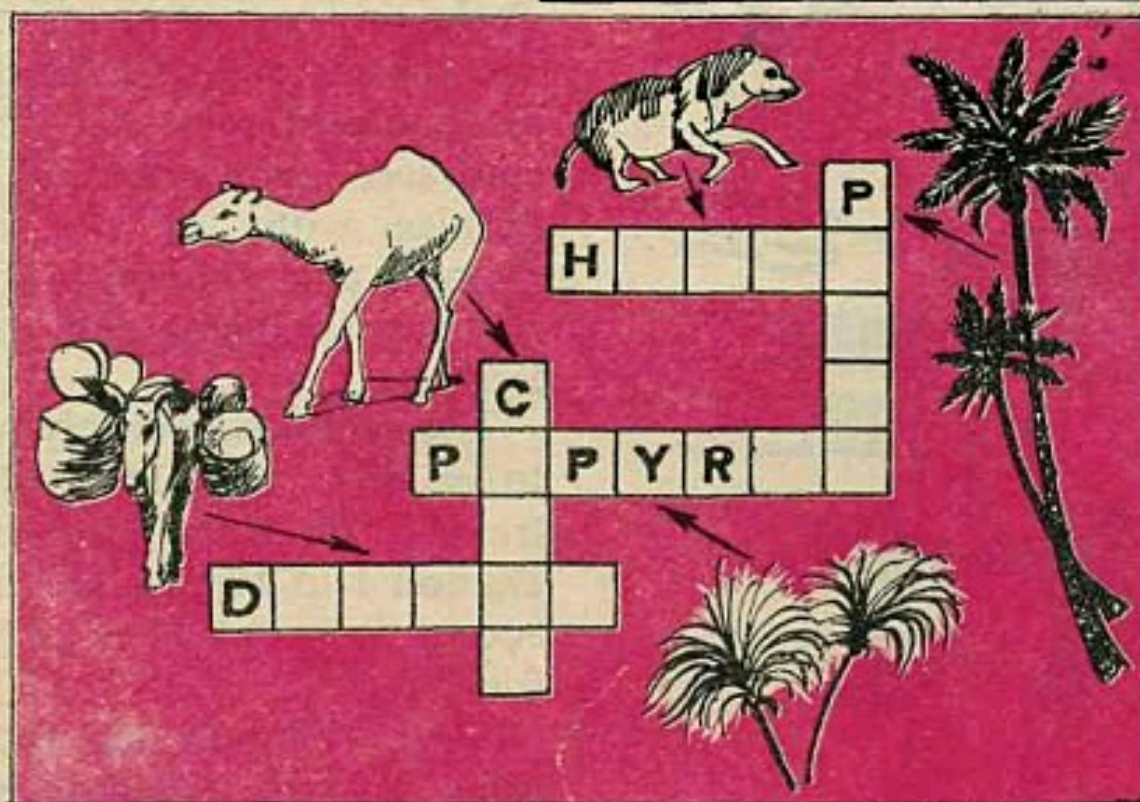


# PUZZLE TIME

These boys have got their toboggan ropes tangled up. Guess which toboggan belongs to each boy and check your answers by tracing along the tangled ropes.

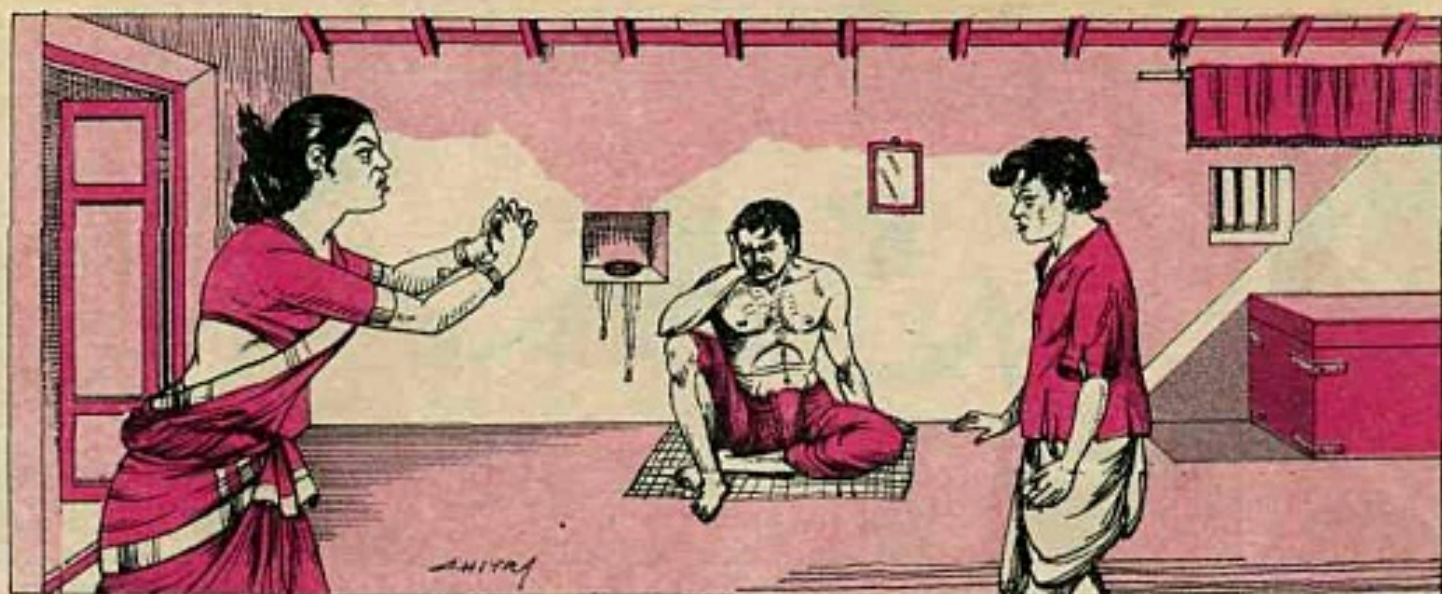


All the clues in this cross word are things that live or can be seen in Egypt.



ANSWERS: Tony owns "B"; Paul owns "C" and John owns "A".  
ACROSS: Hyena, Papyrus, Donkey. DOWN: Palms, Camel.





## Ratan's Luck

When Ratan lost his mother, his father married for the second time. The step-mother was never kind towards Ratan. Poor Ratan worked hard to please her, but she always found fault with him and chided him in a shrill tone.

Whenever Ratan's father tried to speak a word in his son's favour, he was mercilessly rebuffed. He soon got accustomed to the situation and kept quiet even when Ratan was harassed unjustly.

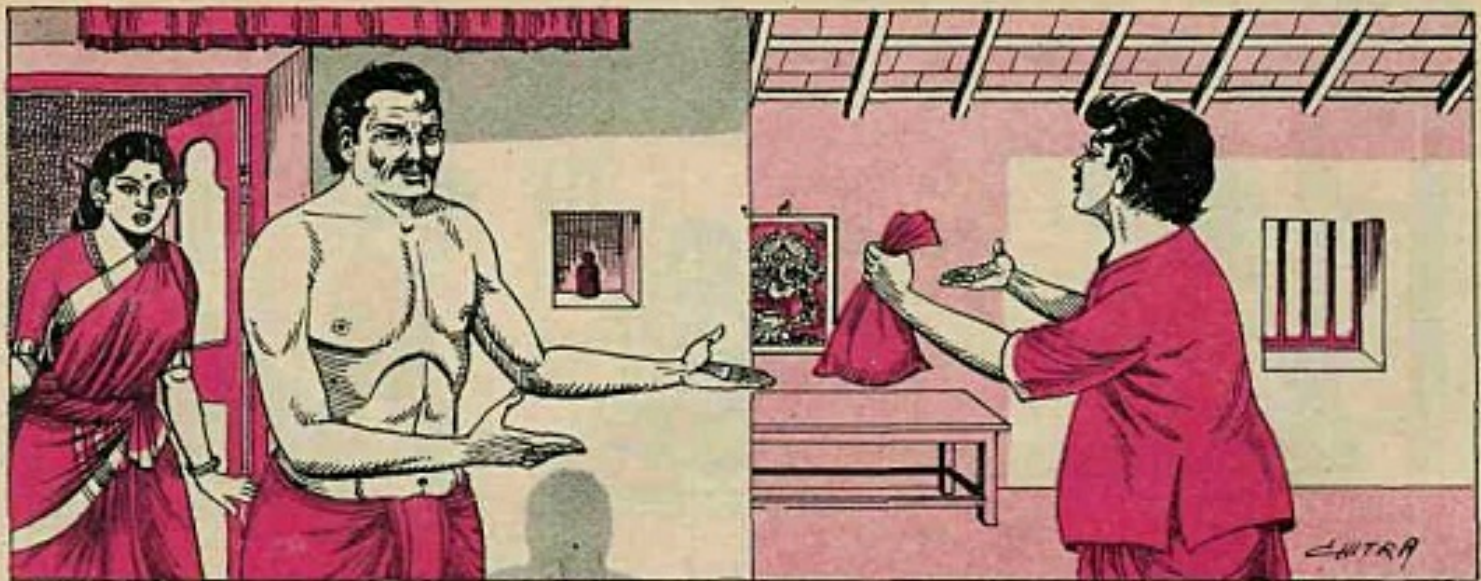
One night, when Ratan's father was away on business, the step-mother heaped a fat lot of abuses on Ratan and rushed at him with a stick. Ratan ran away from the house.

He walked till mid-day and reached the town where the king of the land lived. The king had dreamt an unhappy dream during the previous night and had announced that he will give a handsome reward to anybody who can give a convincing explanation of his dream.

The king's ministers, the courtiers, the astrologers and the scholars had not been able to explain the dream. Now one after another member of the public who thought themselves wise met the king and gave their explanations. But nothing satisfied the king.

Ratan was loitering in front of the palace. The gate-keeper asked him, "Hello, young man!





You too wish to meet the king, do you?"

"Yes," said Ratan without, giving any thought to the question.

He was immediately escorted to the king's presence.

"What have you to say, young man?" asked the king.

Ratan did not know what to say. But his suppressed agony suddenly surged out through these words, "Well, my lord, who does not know about the attitude of the step mother? What need is there to tell you in detail? I am..."

"Tut-tut!" said the king, "I understand." Then he gave a big amount to Ratan as reward.

Ratan returned home with the reward. While his father was delighted, his step-mother was frightened to know that Ratan was in good books of the king. She no more spoke any unkind word to Ratan.

The king had dreamt that his younger queen was advancing towards the crown-prince, the son of the elder queen, with a dagger in her hand. Ratan's words had confirmed the misgivings he had already had in his mind!

In due course Ratan became a prosperous merchant. He looked after his father and step-mother very well when they grew old.

*Make sure of your copy of Chandamama by placing a regular order with your Newsagent*





*New Tales of King Vikram  
and the Vampire*

## THE BRIDEGROOM FOR THE PRINCESS

Gusts of strong, cold wind whipped the king as he walked through the deserted cremation ground defying the dark night, eerie laughter and shrieks of ghosts and intermittent rain. He climbed the big tree and brought the corpse down once again.

Hardly had he begun his return journey when the vampire that had possessed the corpse said, "O King, I am impressed by your determined efforts to achieve success in a certain work. But I wonder if you know that sometimes the fruits of one's labour are enjoyed by someone else. Well, let me narrate to you an episode. It is concerning King Rudradev's daughter's marriage."

Went on the vampire: Rudradev had only one child, a daughter. Aloka was her name.





Princess Aloka, when she grew up to be a maiden, proved herself extremely intelligent. With great rapidity she learnt all the arts in which a princess should be accomplished. The king and the queen were very happy to see their daughter growing into a most ideal princess.

But misfortune befell the royal family when it was least expected. One afternoon the princess went out into the palace garden for a stroll. But when she returned in the evening she appeared a quite different person. She shouted at her parents, tore her own hair and

pushed away her maids when they came to serve her. In other words, she had turned mad.

The king summoned all the famous physicians and necromancers of his kingdom. But they failed to cure the princess. The king then invited such experts from the neighbouring kingdoms. Their elaborate treatments too failed to show any result.

At last the king announced that one who can cure the princess would be eligible to marry her and succeed him to the throne.

Many came forward to try their hands, but none succeeded in bringing about even a moment's change in the condition of the princess.

One day a mendicant camped on the outskirts of the town. King Rudradev heard that he helped many people in their distress, but he generally did not come to anybody's house.

The king, out of his humility, carried his daughter in a palanquin to the mendicant. He told all about his daughter's ailment and about the futile efforts he had so far made to cure her. He also informed the mendicant about the latest announcement



he had made.

The mendicant looked at the princess and said, "She is possessed by an obstinate ghou. But there are a few Brahmins here and there who can drive the ghou out of her person. From tomorrow you arrange for the princess to distribute alms to Brahmins. If the princess would refuse to give alms to any Brahmin, then be sure that he knows the *mantra* which would force the ghou to leave the princess."

The king did as advised by the mendicant. Everyday a large number of Brahmins presented themselves to receive alms from

the princess. Although the princess looked wild, she did not mind obliging the Brahmins.

A month passed. One morning, staring at a certain Brahmin who stood in the line with other Brahmins, she shouted, "Drive that fellow out of my sight immediately!"

The Brahmin was ushered into the king's court.

"O Brahmin, do you know the *mantra* whereby to drive a ghou away from any human being possessed by it?" asked he king.

"I know, my lord!" said the Brahmin and in a few hours he freed the princess from the





ghoul's influence.

The king made arrangements for the Brahmin to marry the princess. But suddenly the mendicant arrived on the scene and demanded to marry the princess.

The king changed his mind instantly. He paid the Brahmin a fat lot of wealth, but married his daughter to the mendicant.

The vampire stopped here and asked, "Tell me, O King Vikram, why did the king change his mind? Was he afraid of the mendicant's power? Or, did he prefer a mendicant to a begging Brahmin? If you know the answer but choose to keep mum, your head would be shattered to pieces!"

Answered King Vikram, "When the king showed his ailing daughter to the mendicant, he had told him of his

decision to give the princess in marriage to anybody who could cure her. Although the mendicant had not said anything upon hearing this condition, he was aware of it when he showed the way to cure the princess. But so far as the Brahmin was concerned, he had come to receive alms, not to cure the princess. The mendicant had already revealed how to cure the princess. The Brahmin was only asked to do a particular work and he was amply rewarded for it. King Rudradev acted as a man with a sound sense of justice should act."

The corpse, possessed by the vampire, slipped off the king's shoulder as soon as he finished giving his answer. King Vikram again turned to reach the tree on which, he knew, the strange corpse would be hanging.







## A GOOD LESSON AT SMALL PRICE!

Durgadutt was a petty merchant. But being a miser, he had accumulated much wealth. He lived alone in his house which had a wider compound.

One day he heard that there had been several cases of burglary in the area. He decided to employ a servant who would raise vegetables in the ground around his house and guard the house at night.

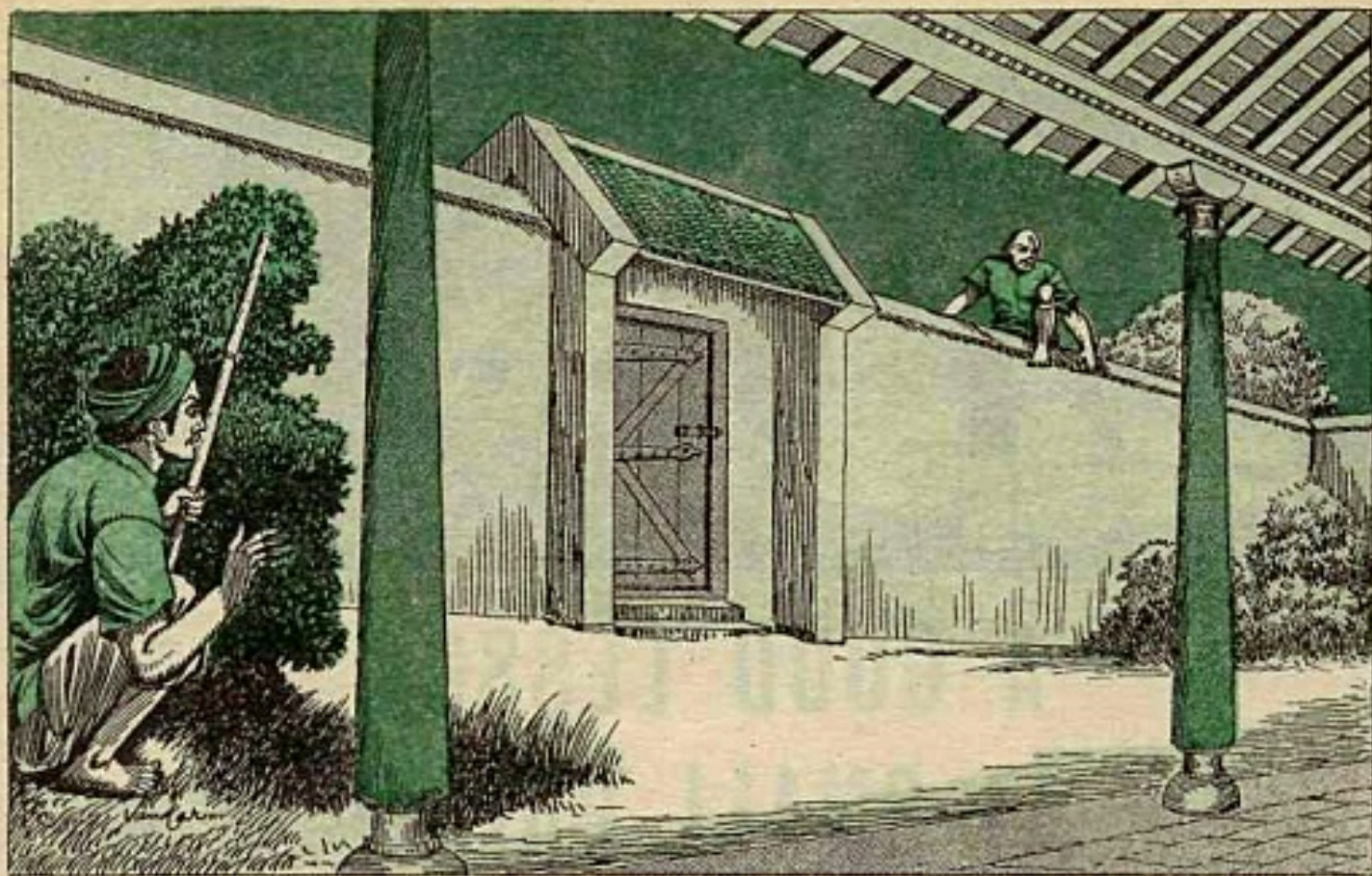
For this purpose he employed Neel, a strong and stout villager whom others certified as honest and faithful.

Neel proved an expert in raising vegetables. He worked hard during the day and kept a

watchful eye on the house as well as the ground at night. But thought Durgadutt one day, "Since Neel is working throughout the day, he must be lying soundly asleep at night. I must once try him."

It was midnight. Durgadutt covered his head with a shawl and stepped out to the rear veranda stealthily. But he stumbled against a lazy cat which gave out an annoyed mew. Neel who was nearby peeped out and saw a fellow roaming on the veranda in a suspicious manner. He picked up a stick and was about to try it on Durgadutt whom he took as a





thief when Durgadutt luckily looked back and shrieked in horror.

Neel was taken aback. "What are you doing at this hour of the night, master?" he asked.

"I wanted to see whether you are keeping proper vigil at night or not. Once in a while I may supervise in this fashion. Before you use your stick, make sure that you are not using it on me!" said Durgadutt and he retired to his room with a sense of contentment.

But the conversation that took place between Durgadutt and Neel was heard by a thief who sat hiding on the other side of

the compound wall. Since long he nursed a wish to burgle Durgadutt's house. Now he thought that the opportunity had come for him to fulfil his wish.

Next day the thief dressed himself like Durgadutt. He even shaved his head to look like him. At midnight he scaled the wall and entered the house. One by one he tried the locks of all the rooms. He could at last open the lock of the kitchen.

Neel saw the thief entering the kitchen. But he mistook him as his master. He felt disgusted at the thought that his master should try him every



night. In order to teach Durgadutt a lesson, he advanced taking soft steps and locked the room from outside.

Inside the room, the thief ate and drank to his heart's content and made a clean bundle of all the utensils.

In the meanwhile Durgadutt came out of his room, in a bid to supervise his servant's work again. He opened the kitchen room and entered it. Instantly the thief pounced upon him and gagged him and bound his hands and legs. Leaving him completely undone on the floor the thief escaped.

Early in the morning Neel

proceeded to the kitchen and opened the door. Imagine his surprise when he saw his master lying on the floor gagged and bound.

Neel freed Durgadutt hurriedly and asked, "How on earth could this happen to you, master? I had locked up the room while a thief was inside. How could the thief change into you?"

Durgadutt felt awfully embarrassed. He said how he had opened the room quietly to see if everything was all right and how the thief took hold of him.

"Master, it all happened because you could never trust me







fully. Thank God that the thief was not able to enter your treasury. You have lost some utensils which were already worn out. You may feel happy that you have earned some good experience at not too high a price!"

Durgadutt realised that what Neel said was right. He was not suspicious of Neel any more. Neel guarded the house efficiently and provided Durgadutt and himself with delicious fruits and vegetables from the ground around the house.

### How One Sees

A man lost a purse with some money in it. He suspected his neighbour's son having stolen it. He looked at the boy. The boy's expression, and movements, indeed, struck him as those of a thief.

But an hour later he found the purse in his own house. He looked at the boy again. Neither the boy's expression nor his movements seemed to be those of a thief!

—Lieh-tzu, China, 3rd Century B.C.

Ignorance is the night of the mind, a night without moon or stars.

—Confucius

O Freedom! What liberties are taken in thy name!

—Daniel George

Vision is the art of seeing things invisible.

Jonathan Swift





## VEER HANUMAN

Vibhishana silenced with a sign of his hand those demons who boasted of their strength and talked big about their ability to vanquish any enemy however powerful. He then saluted Ravana and said:

"It has been said by sages that one should resort to force only when all other means of achieving an end had proved futile. You all are vaunting your muscles without the slightest regard for the experience we recently had with Hanuman. How did he single-handedly create such a havoc? Obviously, he had the blessings of Providence upon him. The fact is, we are hardly justified in our conduct towards Rama. It is argued that Sita Devi was kidnapped because Rama killed some of our

demon heroes like Khara and Dushana. But we forget that Rama killed them because they went to kill Rama. Rama only protected himself. But by kidnapping Sita Devi we have done a positive wrong. I propose, we surrender her to Rama before he has time to attack Lanka. This might sound unpleasant, but this is the only way to avoid further unpleasantness. Let pride and obstinacy not bring about our destruction."

Far from seeing any light in Vibhishana's advice, Ravana fumed and shouted, "I am afraid of none. Rama will not be able to stand long before me even if he were to be assisted by Indra in a battle!"

Ravana convened a conference of his most trusted





Ravana looked at others and said, "I have always sought your advice whenever there has been a crisis. You have always given me sound advice and I have developed great trust in you. So far as the present crisis is concerned, you all know about it. Only Kumbhakarna, who lay asleep for last six months and has just woken up, is to be acquainted with the situation."

Ravana then said, fixing his gaze on Kumbhakarna, "I have kidnapped Sita, the wife of Rama, from Dandakaranya. I am enamoured of her and desire to marry her. But she has taken a year's time to decide whether she should volunteer to marry me or not. I suspect, she hopes that Rama would come to her rescue before the year expired. I doubt if Rama would ever succeed in crossing the sea and setting foot on Lanka. But supposing that he arrives here, what should we do? His emissary, Hanuman, harassed us a good deal. Rama, his brother Lakshmana, and the Vanara King Sugriva, are camping on the other side of the sea. They are still brooding over possible means of crossing the sea. If they manage to

ministers and military experts on the next day. It was attended among others by Vibhishana, Shuka and Prahastha. The conference hall was guarded by armed demon soldiers.

Ravana took his seat on a bejewelled podium. There was ominous silence in the hall. All were anxious to hear the decision their king had taken in the meanwhile.

Ravana looked at Prahastha and said, "General! Make arrangements to guard the city strongly. Employ the best of our soldiers in the work."

"That is done, my lord, tell me what more is required," answered Prahastha.



reach Lanka, will you be able to defeat them? I am eager to hear you, my friends and well-wishers!"

Kumbhakarna said in a harsh tone, "I wish you had sought our advice before going to kidnap Sita. You should have taken into account the dangers that might follow your action. However, it is too late to discuss about all that. Now that you have told me everything, rest assured that I will destroy your enemy. If the Vanaras see me approaching them with my mace, they would take to their heels. Even the gods and their king are afraid of facing me. I will put an end to Rama, Lakshmana and all the rest."

Ravana was not entirely pleased with Kumbhakarna's statement. Mahaparshwa said in a pleasing tone, "If you have brought Sita here desiring to marry her, what stops you from fulfilling your desire? If she is not willing to marry you, why don't you apply force? As long as heroes like Kumbhakarna and Indrajit are there to give you their protection, who can harm you?"

Ravana appeared pleased. He said, "There is a reason why I cannot marry Sita forcibly.



Years ago I had seen a beautiful nymph passing through a lonely road on her way to a god. I had been passionate towards her and had violated her modesty despite her strong protests. She had reported of her humiliation to the god when he met him. The god cursed me saying that I will meet my death if I took the modesty of any woman by force again. That has checked me from applying force on Sita. However, Rama is preparing to invade Lanka because he has no idea of our strength. He is coming to meet his doom."

Said Vibhishana, "O King, I have nothing new to say. Know that Sita Devi is death incarnate





for you! She is like a cup of poison which you should avoid by all means. Go and surrender her to Ramachandra at once. Take it from me that all your heroes cannot be any match for Ramachandra."

Prahastha contradicted Vibhishana saying that Ravana was far superior to Ramachandra in strength. Indrajit told Vibhishana with a sneer, "You are a shame to the dynasty of Pulastya. Whence did you gather such fear? Don't you think that I who could defeat Indra, the king of gods, should be able to defeat two human beings and a troop of Vanaras rather easily?"

"Sonny! You are too young to give any advice on such vital matters. Your attitude is likely to spell doom on the race of demons. You may defeat the gods, but you cannot do the same to Ramachandra. I say this again and again because I have no doubt about it in the least. The only sensible course open to us is to restore Sita Devi to Ramachandra without the least delay," said Vibhishana in a firm voice.

Ravana lost patience. He screamed, "I spare you only because you happen to be my brother. Otherwise I would have beheaded you here and now!"

Vibhishana was not prepared to take it lying down. He too shouted back, "Many are there to please you with flattering words. I will not say anything more harsh because you happen to be my elder brother. It is with pure goodwill for you and the demons that I have tried to change your attitude. But I have failed. I realise that I have no place here. I leave Lanka and her fate to you and depart forthwith."

Vibhishana picked up his mace and left Lanka instantly. Four of his trusted friends



followed him. They flew and crossed the sea and approached the camp of Rama.

Some Vanaras spotted them in the sky and brought them to Sugriva's notice. Sugriva suspected them to be Ravana's spies and expressed his misgivings before Hanuman and others. They picked up stones and remained ready to attack the flying visitors.

Vibhishana and his followers, Anala, Sharava, Sampati and Pradhasa, stopped near Rama's camp. But instead of descending immediately, they remained suspended at a certain height.

Vibhishana said, looking at his listeners below, "I am Vibhishana, the younger brother of Ravana, the demon king notorious for his misdeeds. He has kidnapped Sita Devi, killing the noble Jatayu in the process. Sita Devi is passing her sad days guarded by demonesses. Time and again I advised Ravana to restore her to Ramachandra. But he not only ignored my pleadings, but also insulted and humiliated me. Hence I deserted him in great agony. Leaving behind my family and property, I have come here seeking refuge in Ramachandra's



camp. I request you to inform him about my arrival."

Sugriva hurried to Rama and said, "Vibhishana, the younger brother of Ravana, has arrived here on the pretext of taking refuge in our camp. But, he is a demon, after all. Besides, he is Ravana's own brother. It would be foolish of us to believe him. He and his companions might create dissension in our camp. Or they might poison us. The best course would be to kill them at the very first opportunity."

Rama heard Sugriva with respect. Then he turned to Hanuman and other prominent Vanaras and said, "You have heard



what Sugriva thinks about the visitors. What have you to say about it?"

Angada said, "How can we have trust in a group of visitors from the enemy camp? That might land us in calamity!"

"First we should observe them, by putting a spy among them," suggested Sharava.

"A sudden quarrel between Ravana and his brother sounds like a bit of fiction. We have to be extremely cautious in our dealings with the visitors," observed Jambavan.

"We should send someone to Ravana's court and try to gather the truth. We can then decide whether to accept Vibhishana as our ally or not," said Maind.

Then Hanuman spoke, "None of these suggestions seem practical. How can we plant

a spy amidst the small group of visitors who are still to be admitted into our camp? We can know the truth only after they have mixed with us. Besides, it sounds quite natural to me that Vibhishana gave a bit of good advice to Ravana and Ravana spurned it. Sensitive as he looks, Vibhishana decided to desert him. Such difference of attitudes on a grave issue is quite natural. It is not possible for us to send a spy to Ravana's court to ascertain the truth. Hence I think it proper to welcome the visitors and grant them asylum. Vibhishana might be nurturing the ambition of being crowned by Sri Ramachandra as the king of Lanka after Ravana's defeat. There is nothing wrong in receiving him. But it is up to Sri Ramachandra to decide what should be done."

Contd.







## TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE

Centuries ago Kutilsen was the king of Koshala. Adjacent to Koshala was a small kingdom named Minapur. Koshala was a prosperous Kingdom, but Minapur was not.

The ruler of Minapur, Nakul Singh, was a weak administrator. His kingdom was comprised of only five large villages with five landlords. These landlords were the real powers in the kingdom. They exploited the people mercilessly and kept the king under terror. In fact, each of the five desired to become the ruler of Minapur, dethroning Nakul Singh.

But Nakul Singh had a small army and he could be dethroned only by another king with a greater army. The five landlords separately approached

Kutilsen requesting him to invade Minapur. Each one of them thought that he alone had been clever enough to do so. Kutilsen also never gave a hint to any of the five that others had also approached him with the same request. Nevertheless he hated all the five for their attitude against their own King.

Kutilsen at last led his army into Minapur. It took him no time to defeat Nakul Singh who fled the kingdom.

Kutilsen observed that the people of Minapur lived in great misery. Neither their ruler nor the five landlords did anything to improve their lot.

He called the five landlords and told them, "I should choose one of you as the new ruler of



Minapur. But all the five of you are my friends. I am at a loss to understand whom to choose. The best course will be to let the people choose. After three months I will ascertain the people's wish and then give one of you the throne of Minapur."

Eager to win the people's support, the landlords busied themselves in erecting schools, repairing temples, digging ponds and founding charitable dispensaries. Within three months, the face of Minapur changed.

People were happy, King Kutilsen too was happy to see the condition of Minapur improving.

But in doing the developmental works each landlord neglected his own village because he was sure of the support of his own people. Because of this

and because of their old tyranny, each landlord was unpopular in his own village.

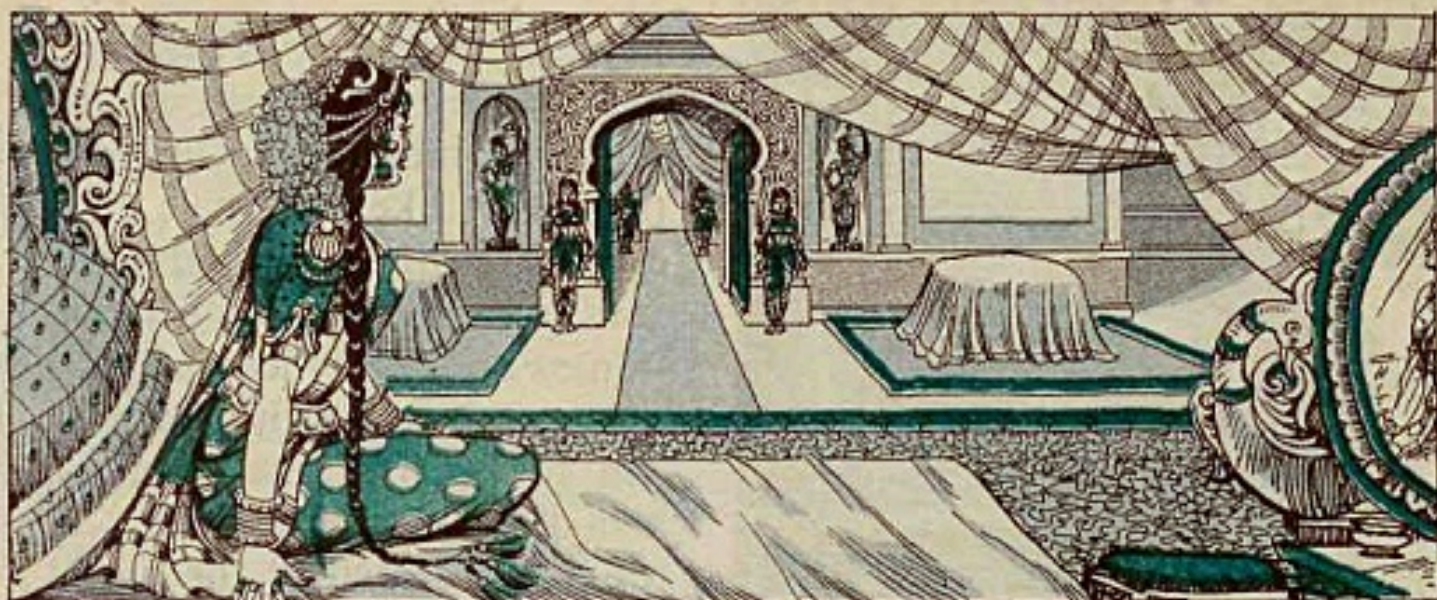
King Kutilsen called the five landlords after three months and said, "My report is, none of you is popular in your own village. A landlord who is not liked by his own people is not worthy of ruling the entire kingdom. I have decided to appoint one of my trusted officers as the governor of Minapur. Thanks a lot for your service to the people."

The landlords had spent all their wealth in earning popularity. They had no resources to rise against Kutilsen.

Thus Kutilsen killed two birds with one stone. He brought benefit to the people; he dismissed the claim of all the five landlords to the throne of Minapur.







## DOUBLING THE MOHURS

by A. C. SORCER, *Magician*

King Jaybhadra had been a widower twice. But he was lucky in his third wife, Taravati, who was a charming young lady of many virtues.

No wonder that the king should grow extremely fond of her. Taravati accompanied the king on all his pleasure trips and hunting expeditions.

"The last we had been to the forest was three months ago. It is time we go there again. This time we should camp there for a few days," the king told the queen one morning.

The queen was very happy to hear this. Although she was not quite fond of hunting, the natural scenery of the forest, the cool water of the lake on the bank of which they camp, had a great attraction for her.

The expedition was to start early in the morning on a certain day. The queen was ready for the outing. But she waited to know from the king exactly how many days he planned to spend in the forest. Accordingly she would decide how many sets of dress she should carry with her.

But the king did not visit the queen's apartment that night. The queen thought that he was perhaps busy trying to finish important works of the court before going out on the trip. But great was her bewilderment and sorrow when, in the morning, she was told that the king had already left for the forest! Not only that, before leaving the palace, he had passed orders to the effect that the queen should





be treated as a prisoner in her own apartment around which guards had been posted!

The queen failed to think of any reason which could have vexed the king. She loved the king deeply and there was every reason to believe that the king too loved her equally well. Why then the events took such a turn? The queen wept and passed her time without food.

It was a pity that at this hour of crisis Kumari, the queen's dearest maid, was not there to console her. On a report that her father was mortally sick, Kumari had left for her home which was at the end of the

town, in the previous evening.

It was on the fourth day that Kumari returned. She loved the queen like the apple of her eye. The queen too loved her very much because of her faithfulness and cleverness.

Kumari, naturally, was stunned to hear all that had happened during her absence. She too wept, seated at the queen's feet.

"Tell me, Kumari, how is your father?" asked the queen.

"He is no more. But it is a great consolation for me that I could see him before he closed his eyes forever. I am grateful to you, O queen, for the way you let me out of the palace at night. If I would have waited till morning, I could not have seen my father alive," replied Kumari.

"You must have heard of my misfortune," said the queen, "but I desire to know why I am punished by the king. Will you please carry a letter to the king when he returns from the forest?"

"I will, O sweet queen. I will do anything to save you from this disgrace" replied Kumari.

The king returned the same day. Kumari met him at the



earliest opportunity and gave him the queen's letter. The queen had desired to know, in all humility, the cause of the king's wrath. But upon reading the letter the king shouted, "She has proved faithless to me. She deserves to die!"

Kumari was shocked. But she did not lose her composure. She entreated the king to hear the queen once, before deciding upon any further punishment for her.

The king agreed to meet the queen in the evening.

Kumari gathered from the other maids that on the night previous to the expedition, the king was coming towards the queen's apartment. But he stopped midway in the garden outside the apartment and hastily retreated.

After some quiet reflection, Kumari could guess the cause of the king's suspicion. She returned to the queen and told her what she thought about the matter. After four days, smile returned to the queen's lips. Kumari counselled the queen to do a certain thing when the king would visit her. The queen agreed to act accordingly.

In the evening the king entered the queen's chamber,



fuming. He lost no time in voicing his accusation against the queen, "I have seen with my own eyes the proof of your faithlessness. Death is the only punishment for you!"

"My lord! Must you accept as truth whatever you see?" questioned the queen in a murmuring tone.

"What do you mean? Of course, I must believe as true whatever I see!" said the king angrily.

The queen called a maid and asked her to bring a cup and a saucer. Then she asked the king to keep four gold mohurs on the saucer. After the king





did so, she drew the king's attention to the cup which was empty. There was nothing in any of her hands either. Then she held the saucer in her left hand and the cup in her right hand. Lifting both of them to a level slightly higher than the level of the king's eyes, she poured down the mohurs which were in the saucer into the cup.

"How many mohurs are there in the cup?" she asked the king.

"What is the fun in asking me such a question? There should be four mohurs in the cup! I saw you transferring the four mohurs I gave you from the

saucer to the cup!" was the king's reply.

"Thank you, my lord," said the queen while showing the cup to the king. There were eight mohurs in the cup!

"How could this happen?" stammered out the king with surprise.

"I will tell you later how it happened. But does this not convince you that what you see or what you think you saw is not always correct?" asked the queen.

"Well, I should agree to your observation in principle, but, what I saw that evening..."

The queen did not allow the king to complete his sentence. She said, "I know what you saw. Pardon me for a moment and see it again."

The queen clapped her hands. Instantly somebody who looked like a young man in the dress of a palace guard entered the room and the queen embraced the fellow.

Instinctively the king took hold of the 'young man'. But the queen giggled and pulled off the beard and the moustache the fellow had put on. The face that appeared was that of Kumari.

The king looked perplexed.



"My lord! I have broken a palace rule for which you may punish me. The palace rules do not permit our maids to go out of the palace after the nightfall. A few days back, the news reached me late in the evening that Kumari's father was mortally sick. There was no time to obtain your special permission to let her leave the palace at night. I resorted to a trick. I dressed up Kumari as a palace guard and let her out. A queen has the right to have a little fun, hasn't she? Before she left me, I embraced her. That is what you saw through my window while you were crossing the garden. Am I not right, my lord?" asked the queen.

The king blushed and knelt down before the queen. "I have no word to apologise, Taravati! I am guilty of a grave sin!" he managed to say.

"Don't you worry," said the queen smilingly, "You menfolk are always suspicious!"

The king, in his repentant mood, forgot to ask all about the four mohurs becoming eight. But the queen, who was keen to cheer up the king again, disclosed to him the secret of the trick. She had kept four mohurs glued to the bottom of the saucer with dabs of soap. When she poured the four mohurs which the king had placed on the saucer into the cup, she also managed to slip into it the extra four mohurs kept glued to the bottom of the saucer. She held the saucer in such way that the hidden mohurs could not have been seen by the king, being covered by her fingers.

The king was amused. His respect for the queen increased manifold.





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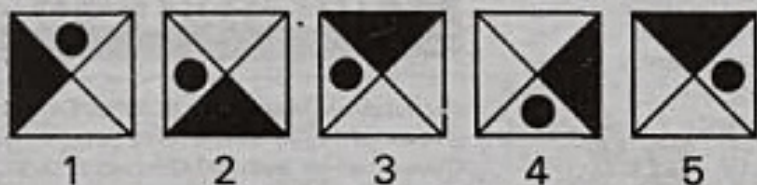


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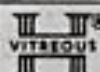
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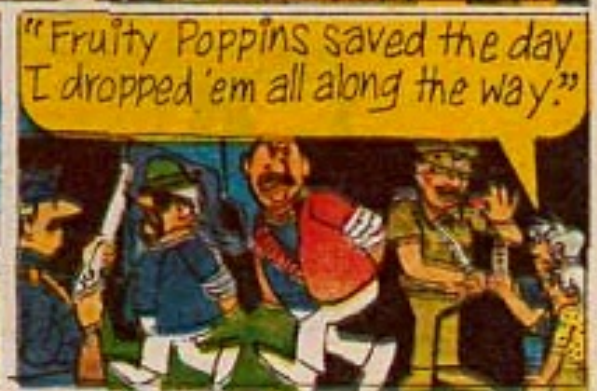
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